

WISCONSIN'S VOICE

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
ELIZABETH BURMASTER, STATE SUPERINTENDENT

INTRODUCTION

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), currently defined as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), is now entering its fifth year of implementation and is scheduled for reauthorization by Congress in 2007. Over the past year, State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster has gathered feedback on NCLB from the educational community in Wisconsin. Creating a common, cohesive voice is essential for our state to ensure the reauthorization of NCLB works for Wisconsin children.



GATHERING INPUT IN WISCONSIN—THE PROCESS

Feedback on the various provisions of NCLB has been gathered in a variety of ways throughout this past year. Educational organizations, individuals, and other partners have had the opportunity to voice their perspectives and recommendations related to NCLB through written testimony, listening sessions, and surveys. A result of this process is the identification of themes and possible recommendations for the State Superintendent to advance as the reauthorization process continues.

Collaborative Council Testimony

On February 21 and April 18, 2006, the State Superintendent's Collaborative Council shared testimony representing their organization's thoughts on the upcoming reauthorization of NCLB.

The council is comprised of the following Wisconsin education-related organizations:

Association of WI School Administrators
Cooperative Educational Service Agencies
Professional Standards Council for Teachers
School Administrators Alliance
WI Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
WI Association of School Boards
WI Association of School Business Officials
WI Association of School District Administrators
WI Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
WI Council of Administrators of Special Services
WI Education Association Council
WI Federation of Teachers
University of WI System



Educational Organizations Listening Sessions

On June 22 and September 14, 2006, educational organizations, partners, and representatives of the State Superintendent's various task forces and advisory councils shared their thoughts on NCLB. We engaged in an interactive process called "Conversational Café," where participants joined in rich conversations around five major areas of NCLB: testing, accountability, identification and sanctions, teacher quality, and data collection/reporting. Three questions were posed to participants at each conversation table:

- 1. What's been working so far?**
- 2. What are the challenges that we face with the existing law?**
- 3. What would you like to see changed in the law?**



The following organizations, task forces, and advisory councils were represented at the Listening Sessions:

Charter Schools Council	State Superintendent's Educational Data Advisory Council	WI Council of Teachers of English Language Arts
Committee of Practitioners		
Educational Communications Board	State Superintendent's Education Technology Advisory Committee	WI Early Childhood Association
ESEA Testing Advisory Committee	State Superintendent's High School Task Force	WI Educational Media Association
Financial Literacy		WI Indian Education Association
Forces for Four Year Olds Council	State Superintendent's Special Education Advisory Council	WI Knowledge and Concepts Examinations
International Education Council	WI Alliance for Arts Education	WI Mathematics Council, Inc.
Library Information and Technology Advisory Committee	WI Association for Bilingual Education	WI Music Educators Association
Parent Leadership Corps	WI Association for Career and Technical Education	WI Rural Challenge, Inc.
Quality Education Coalition	WI Association of Foreign Language Teachers	WI School Counselor Association
Service Learning Lab	WI Association of School Nurses	WI School Psychologists Association
State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Rural Schools, Libraries, and Communities	WI Association of Talented and Gifted	WI School Social Workers Association
State Superintendent's Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council	WI Center for Academically Talented Youth	WI Society of Science Teachers
State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Council	WI Council on Children and Families	WI Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
	WI Council of Religious and Independent Schools	WI Title I Association
		WI State Reading Association

District Administrator Input Session

On June 27, 2006, Wisconsin school district administrators were invited to share testimony regarding NCLB at the State Superintendent’s Collaborative Council meeting.

**Online Survey:
Early Childhood and NCLB**

While NCLB does not specifically include early childhood education, it has had a definite impact on many early childhood programs. To capture the voice of a broad cross section of Wisconsin’s early childhood education and care community, a web-based survey and other activities were conducted in the spring and summer of 2006.

EMERGING THEMES

Information shared at the various input-gathering sessions was compiled and organized into five major areas: accountability, testing, identification and sanctions, teacher quality, and data collection/reporting. A summary of the emerging themes in each of the five areas is as follows:

Accountability		
Requirements: ✓ Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) —state established accountability bars in four areas— test participation, reading proficiency, math proficiency, attendance or graduation. ✓ Required disaggregation of data by subgroups of students with significant numbers.		
What’s working?	What are the challenges?	What should be changed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disaggregation of data has helped to put a great emphasis on the needs of special populations who are not performing well.• Disaggregation of data has resulted in new approaches and strategies to assist all students to succeed.• Supports data-based decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disaggregation of data and holding schools and districts accountable for the performance of subgroups has created scapegoats, blame, or negative attitudes toward low-performing populations.• The complex accountability model required by NCLB is difficult to understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More funding to ensure we truly can help each student succeed to high standards regardless of condition.• Accountability should be based on more than large scale state assessment and should include formative assessments.

Accountability (cont.)

What's working?	What are the challenges?	What should be changed?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal of 100% proficiency by 2013-14 is laudable, but unrealistic and the formula does not adequately recognize or give credit to growth. • The curriculum is narrowing, and teachers are losing their ability to be creative and innovative while "teaching to the test." • The tone of the law is negative and punitive as opposed to providing opportunities and support. • Accountability based on state assessment alone in two subject areas is not an accurate reflection on how well the school is performing. • Applying NCLB standards and benchmarks to young children does not take into account their wide developmental range. • The law does not recognize that the achievement gap exists when students enter school, and an important component in closing the gap is to assure quality early learning opportunities. • If the static model of AYP is not changed, eventually no school or district will make AYP. • An accountability model that requires all students to meet a static bar for achievement is problematic for students such as students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) because they are starting further behind and have further to go. • The accountability model does not differentiate between schools that are very close to proficiency targets or miss in only one subgroup from those that are very far behind or are missing proficiency targets in multiple subgroups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow schools and districts to use growth and value-added models that give credit for students who have made significant growth in achievement. • Set fair and realistic rules and allow greater flexibility for special populations such as students with disabilities and ELLs. • Simplify the accountability model so that it can be understood by educators and non-educators alike. • Level the playing field between large, more diverse, high-poverty schools and small, less diverse, low-poverty schools. • Allow greater flexibility for special population schools, such as schools serving at-risk students, in setting accountability provisions. • Remove the requirement of 100% proficient by 2013-14 and allow states to create variable end dates based on the starting points of various subgroups of students. • The United States Department of Education (USED) should fund research to help states develop more effective accountability systems that meet individual state needs. • Require "transparency" in the approval of state accountability models. • Require state and federal partnerships in developing accountability models that work for each state.

Testing

Requirements: ✓ **Reading and mathematics testing in grades 3-8 and once in high school beginning 2005-06.**
 ✓ **Science testing at the elementary, middle, and high school levels beginning 2007-08.**

What's working?

- State assessment data is being used to show trends and is being used to provide focus and assist with interventions.
- Each child is now accounted for and all children are being assessed, even children with special needs.
- Schools are held accountable for how they perform on state assessments.

What are the challenges?

- Too much time and too many resources spent preparing and administering tests, which takes away from instruction and other student services.
- No motivation for students to do well. High stakes test for schools – no stakes test for students.
- There has been additional stress and negative emotional effects on children.
- Losing positions in other instructional areas, so districts can hire more mathematics and reading teachers.
- ELL students are being over-tested. They need more than 3 years to become proficient in English before they are subject to testing.
- The focus on testing poses problems for young children; it distorts learning and can frustrate the developmental process.
- The lag time between test administration and availability of results is too long.
- Statewide assessments are limited in how much they reveal about a school's effectiveness.

What should be changed?

- Allow states to determine which grades to test.
- Require less testing in terms of number of grades tested and eliminate the requirement to test annually.
- Allow multiple types of tests, including local assessments that are aligned with Wisconsin standards, to be utilized to meet the requirements of NCLB.

Identification and Sanctions

- Requirements:** ✓ Schools and districts labeled as being identified for improvement if they miss one of the four areas of accountability for two years or more in a row.
- ✓ Required federal sanctions for Title I schools identified for improvement (i.e. school choice, supplemental educational services, school restructuring).

What's working?	What are the challenges?	What should be changed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregation of data and identification has created a sense of urgency and concern. • There is a recognition that some groups of students are not performing as well as others. • School staff are reacting to try to respond to the areas that missed AYP. • Identification has resulted in increased funding/support to some schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrowed curriculum due to fear of identification. • The federally-mandated sanctions are not relevant to many Wisconsin school districts, such as small rural. • The sanctions are uniform regardless of how close or far away a school was to meeting AYP. • There is no recognition or benefit for excellence or exceeding expectations. • Schools must implement interventions regardless of improvement made or the degree to which a school fails to make AYP. • There are not enough funds to support all who need it. • NCLB takes a very positive goal of improving student achievement, but creates a punitive climate for change that has no basis in research for improving schools. • There is limited research that shows that the sanctions under NCLB will result in improved student achievement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a system of identification and support, not identification and sanctions. • Create supports of adequate duration. Schools should not skip in and out of eligibility for support. • Transform the NCLB law from one that uses punitive measures to one that provides incentives, not sanctions. • Define school success more broadly than four indicators, three of which are tied to test scores in two subjects. • Create supports for subgroups across schools rather than just individual schools.

Teacher Quality

- Requirements:** ✓ **All teachers hired after January 8, 2002, and teaching in a program supported by Title I funds must be highly qualified and all teachers teaching “core academic subjects” are to be highly qualified by 2005-06.**
- ✓ **Core academic subjects means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.**

What’s working?	What are the challenges?	What should be changed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher preparation and professional development process is working well.• Wisconsin teachers are well trained and the PI 34 certification and professional development process ensures teachers are highly qualified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Praxis test (content level exams) for demonstrating content knowledge is limiting and is simply a paper and pencil assessment that doesn’t recognize other critical teaching skills.• Rural areas face unique challenges in regard to the highly qualified teacher requirements.• Staffing schools with specialized needs, such as ELLs and students with disabilities, is difficult.• Finding teachers with multiple certifications, especially at the middle level, is difficult.• It is difficult to attract high quality teachers to high-need schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Praxis test (content level exams) should be eliminated or accommodate teachers with special skills.• Expand the list of “highly qualified” school staff to increase awareness that students need more than teachers to succeed.• Recognize the importance of high-quality, licensed, and certified early childhood teachers.

Data Collection/Reporting

- Requirements:**
- ✓ **Student outcome data disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, disability, economic status, migrant status, English language proficiency.**
 - ✓ **Outcomes = test results, attendance, and graduation rates (and dropouts).**
 - ✓ **States must report on the acquisition of English proficiency by English language learners.**

What's working?	What are the challenges?	What should be changed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data emphasis has been important and has made schools more data knowledgeable. • Looking at all students as well as subgroups is important and has brought a greater focus to groups of students not performing well. • Districts and schools are using data for improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disaggregation of data is creating blame for performance to certain groups of students. • Finding time and resources for teachers and administrators to learn how to effectively use the data is difficult. • Making sure that all students are achieving at their highest levels and using data to accomplish this task is challenging. • Attendance, graduation, and school achievement data are not uniformly reported across the nation, and yet are still used to compare states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require more comprehensive data collections with more information. • There needs to be more immediate access to data. • NCLB needs to recognize the cost of data collection and management.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE WISCONSIN'S VOICE

On June 9, 2006, State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster testified on Wisconsin's efforts to implement NCLB requirements related to effective interventions for struggling schools at a hearing held by the Aspen Institute's Blue Ribbon Commission on No Child Left Behind.

Superintendent Burmaster will continue to be a voice for Wisconsin as President of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Chair of CCSSO's ESEA Reauthorization Task Force. Wisconsin's voice will also be shared through our Congressional Delegation and other avenues for input as the debate on NCLB continues.



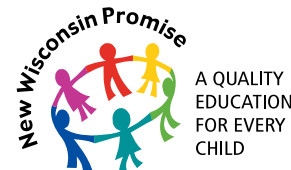
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